

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

A FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR THE REHABILITATION OF COMMERCIAL BUILDING FAÇADES

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions of features which convey its historical, cultural or architectural values.

The Independence Façade Improvement Grant Program is made possible through the financial assistance of the Independence Urban Renewal District (IURD). The Program is designed to encourage private investment by commercial property owners and tenants. The goal is to improve the appearance of businesses through façade rehabilitation and restoration that emphasizes uniqueness and historic value.

The Program provides eligible and qualified applicants with matching grants and design assistance to assist with the rehabilitation of commercial structures within the Urban Renewal District. Projects must achieve visible results that enhance Independence's downtown image, marketability, and economic vitality.

The Program recognizes the importance of choosing rehabilitation techniques that enhance rather than detract from the character of Independence's historic and traditional architecture. All projects under the Program must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and are subject to design review by the Independence Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC). Projects under the Program must also conform to applicable state and local requirements.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What Types of Grants are Available?

The Program includes three types of grants: (1) general improvement matching grants, (2) signage matching grants, and (3) design assistance grants.

Who May Apply for a Grant Under the Program?

Any property owner or business tenant (with the property owner's approval) of a commercial property located within the Independence Urban Renewal District (see the map at the end of this packet) is eligible to apply for a grant. Grants are not available for residential or industrial properties. No property is eligible to receive the same type of grant more than once.

How Much Money is Available For General Façade Improvements?

The size of an individual general improvement matching grant depends on the scope of the project. The maximum general improvement matching grant available for a given project is determined by one of the two methods specified below:

Method 1 (Tax Lot Method): Each individual tax lot is eligible for a maximum general improvement matching grant of \$5,000. Consult the Polk County Assessor's Office to determine applicable tax lot boundaries.

Method 2 (Frontage Method): The maximum general improvement matching grant for a given project can alternatively be calculated based on the street frontage of the subject building. This method was developed to allow for enhanced assistance to large projects with substantial visual impact on the downtown core. Under the frontage method, the maximum general improvement matching grant for a given project is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Max. Match} = \$250 \times (\text{1st Story Frontage}) + \$125 \times (\text{2nd Story Frontage}) + \$125 \times (\text{3rd Story Frontage})$$

Frontage is building frontage (measured in linear feet) and does not include unimproved property frontage. To qualify for use in the above formula, frontage must face Main St. between "B" St. and "D" St., face "B" St. between 2nd St. and Main St., face "C" Street between 2nd St. and a line parallel to and 100 ft. east of Main St., or face Monmouth St. between 2nd St. and Main St.

The maximum general improvement matching grant (as determined by Method 1 or Method 2 above) is a maximum only. In all cases, applicants will receive the lesser of the applicable maximum general improvement matching grant or 50% of their qualifying expenses. Qualifying expenses include all expenses necessary to complete the approved project. Qualifying expenses do not include the value of in kind contributions (*e.g.*, the value of personal services of the owner or the owner's agent). Adjoining property owners can pool their maximum general improvement matching grants into a common project so long as the common project encompasses each of the participating properties.

How Much Money is Available For Signage?

Each individual tax lot is eligible for a maximum signage matching grant of \$1,000. Consult the Polk County Assessor's Office to determine applicable tax lot boundaries. Applicants will receive the lesser of the applicable maximum signage matching grant or 50% of their qualifying expenses. Qualifying expenses include all expenses necessary to complete the approved signage project.

How Much Money is Available For Design Assistance?

Each individual tax lot is eligible for a maximum design assistance grant of \$500. Consult the Polk County Assessor's Office to determine applicable tax lot boundaries. Unlike the general improvement and signage matching grants, receipt of the design assistance grant does not require a matching contribution. Only fees from a registered architect or a licensed engineer qualify for reimbursement.

Is Professional Design Assistance Required?

To ensure compliance with the Program's design standards, professional design assistance is recommended for all planned improvements. Professional design assistance is required for major improvements (*e.g.*, storefront replacements and structural façade improvements). The IHPC has the sole discretion to determine whether professional design assistance is required for any given project.

What Projects Are Eligible for Funding?

Only projects that further the Program's goals are eligible for funding. In general, most projects that improve the condition or historical accuracy of a building's façade will be eligible for funding. Examples of façade elements that can be improved under the Program include: siding, masonry, windows, doors, exterior lighting, awnings, paint, stucco, cornices, columns, and storefronts. In most cases, replacement of original façade elements will not be eligible for funding if restoration of the original façade elements is feasible.

What Projects Are Ineligible for Funding?

Although routine maintenance and upkeep is strongly encouraged, projects that do not affect the condition or historical accuracy of a building's façade generally are ineligible for funding under the Program. Examples of building elements for which improvements generally are ineligible for funding under the Program include: roofs, foundations (other than storefront foundations), interiors, driveways, parking lots, and landscaping. Grants under the Program also cannot be used for building acquisition.

What Criteria Does the IHPC Use to Approve or Reject Applications to the Program?

As a condition of funding being awarded under the Program, all applications and completed projects are subject to review by the IHPC. In determining whether an application should be approved or rejected, the IHPC considers whether the proposed project conforms to the Program's design standards and the degree to which the proposed project furthers the goals of

the Program. To ensure the best use of limited resources, applications for projects on buildings that are already historically appropriate and in good condition will be rejected. If applications exceed available funding, they may be carried over to the following year.

What is the Time Limit for Completing Projects Under the Program?

All projects under the Program must be completed within one year from date of grant-application approval by the IHPC, with six-month extensions available for large projects at the discretion of the IHPC.

What if Details of the Project Change After Approval of the Application?

Changes must be approved by the IHPC. When changes are necessitated by circumstances beyond the control of the applicant and when delayed approval of the changes would result in serious hardship on the applicant, the IHPC Chairman will convene a special meeting of the IHPC to vote on the changes. All approved changes will be attached to the original application, dated, and signed by the IHPC Chairman.

What are the Respective Roles of the IHPC and the IURD?

The IHPC interprets and administers the Program and makes recommendations regarding grant awards. The IURD provides ultimate approval of grant awards. The details of the Program may be amended, subject to formal approval of a majority of the IHPC.

Does Participation in the Program Eliminate the Need to Obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness?

Yes. Projects described in approved grant applications are not required to obtain a certificate of appropriateness from the IHPC.

When Do I Receive the Grant Award?

The City of Independence will attempt to issue grant awards in a timely manner following authorization by the IURD. Since the volume of grant awards in any particular year is difficult to predict, some grant awards may be delayed by up to one year.

How Do I Obtain Assistance with the Program?

To make the Program more accessible to property owners, the IHPC appoints a Program Coordinator. The duties of the Program Coordinator include: informing property owners about the Program, encouraging participation in the Program, answering questions regarding the Program, and assisting applicants in complying with the Program Procedure. The current Program Coordinator is Ted Baker (email address: theodorbaker@yahoo.com).

DESIGN STANDARDS

Project activities **must** conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. The standards are as follows:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The Program's design assistance grant described above is intended to aid applicants in meeting these design standards.

PROGRAM PROCEDURE

1. The applicant submits a letter of intent to the Independence Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC) with a brief description of the project and a cost estimate. A blank letter of intent form is included with this packet.
2. The IHPC meets with the applicant to discuss the project, perform a property inspection, and determine the project's eligibility. If the applicant is applying for a general improvement matching grant, the IHPC measures the building frontage to determine the maximum general improvement matching grant available. The IHPC also determines whether professional design assistance will be required for the project. If appropriate, the IHPC makes preliminary design suggestions and recommends design professionals to the applicant.
3. The applicant and any participating design professionals complete a design plan that illustrates all proposed work on an eligible project. The design plan is submitted to the IHPC along with a completed application form and a completed project cost estimate form. Blank design plan, application, and project cost estimate forms are included with this packet. Paid invoices from design professionals can be submitted to the City of Independence at City Hall for reimbursement under the design assistance grant at any time after this step in the Program Procedure.
4. The IHPC reviews the submitted materials and votes on whether or not to approve the application. If not approved, the IHPC explains, in writing, to the applicant the reasons for rejection and what, if any, steps can be taken to receive approval.
5. Upon approval of the application, the IHPC sends a letter of approval to the applicant outlining the terms of the grant.
6. The applicant commences the project. IHPC members monitor the progress of the project. Changes to the design plan are approved by the IHPC as necessary.
7. The applicant completes the project within the allowed time period (one year with six-month extensions available if approved by the IHPC) and submits paid invoices to the City of Independence at City Hall.
8. The applicant and the IHPC conduct a final inspection of the project (if necessary) to determine compliance with the design plan. If the project complies with the design plan, the IHPC votes to recommend approval of the grant.
9. Upon the recommendation of the IHPC, the Independence Urban Renewal District (IURD) awards the grant. The applicant receives the approved grant amount from the City of Independence.

Deviation from an approved design plan may disqualify the applicant from the Program. The IHPC has the sole authority to determine whether any particular deviation negatively affects the Program's goals substantially enough to warrant disqualification.

LETTER OF INTENT
Façade Improvement Grant Program

To: Independence Façade Improvement Program
PO Box 7
Independence, OR 97351
Attn: Manager

Please be informed that I, as a property owner or business tenant, intend to begin and complete a project under the Façade Improvement Grant Program.

Project Address: _____

The following is a brief description of the project:

Estimated project cost: _____ Targeted completion date: _____

It is my understanding that the project shall be based upon a design plan mutually agreeable to myself and the Independence Historic Preservation Commission. If I do not own the building at issue, I will receive written permission from the owner to make any improvements.

It is also my understanding this 'Letter of Intent' does not guarantee a promise of financial assistance from the Independence Façade Improvement Grant Program and that the Independence Historic Preservation Commission may require further information.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Phone: _____

Applicant Mailing Address: _____

APPLICATION FORM
Façade Improvement Grant Program

Project Address: _____

Applicant: Name: _____ Phone: _____
Fax: _____ Email: _____

Owner (if different): Name: _____ Phone: _____
Fax: _____ Email: _____

I am applying for the following grant(s):
_____ General Improvement Grant
_____ Signage Grant
_____ Design Assistance Grant

Estimated Project Start Date: _____

Estimated Project Completion Date: _____

It is my understanding that grant eligibility for this project shall be based upon the Program design standards, furtherance of the Program goals, and the recommendation and the approval of the Independence Historic Preservation Commission. I understand that I am responsible for obtaining **all necessary permits for the project and for following all appropriate codes**. I understand that I am eligible to receive funding under the Program only upon full compliance with the Program Procedure and upon successful completion of the project as outlined in this application, including any changes required by the Independence Historic Preservation Commission. I understand that this application does not guarantee a promise of financial assistance from the Program and that the Independence Historic Preservation Commission may require further information.

Applicant: _____
(Printed Name) (Signature)

Owner (if different): _____
(Printed Name) (Signature)

Submit to: **Independence Façade Improvement Program**
PO Box 7
Independence, OR 97351
Phone: 503.838.1212, Fax: 503.606.3282
Email: gellis@ci.independence.or.us

(Please complete the following pages and submit with the application)

PROJECT COST ESTIMATE FORM

Below is a list of activities that may be eligible for funding. Please enter cost estimates in the spaces below to generate a total cost estimate for your project. If you plan to hire a general contractor to complete your project under a project fee agreement (rather than under an hourly agreement), you must attach at least two bids.

- \$ _____ Awning
- \$ _____ Exterior Lighting
- \$ _____ Masonry
- \$ _____ Painting
- \$ _____ Cornice
- \$ _____ Signage
- \$ _____ Design (Architectural and Engineering)
- \$ _____ Storefront Windows (Transom and Display)
- \$ _____ Upper Façade Windows
- \$ _____ Entry Doors
- \$ _____ Structural Columns
- \$ _____ Storefront Foundation
- \$ _____ Demolition
- \$ _____ Other (Please specify: _____)

- \$ _____ **TOTAL PROJECT COST (Estimated)**

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Letter of Intent Received by City of Independence: ___/___/___

Date of Initial Meeting Between Applicant and IHPC: ___/___/___

Date Application Received by City of Independence: ___/___/___

Date of IHPC Review of Application: ___/___/___

Date of Owner Notification of Approved or Rejected Application: ___/___/___

Date of Final Inspection and IHPC Approval of Grant: ___/___/___

Date of IURD Release of Grant: ___/___/___

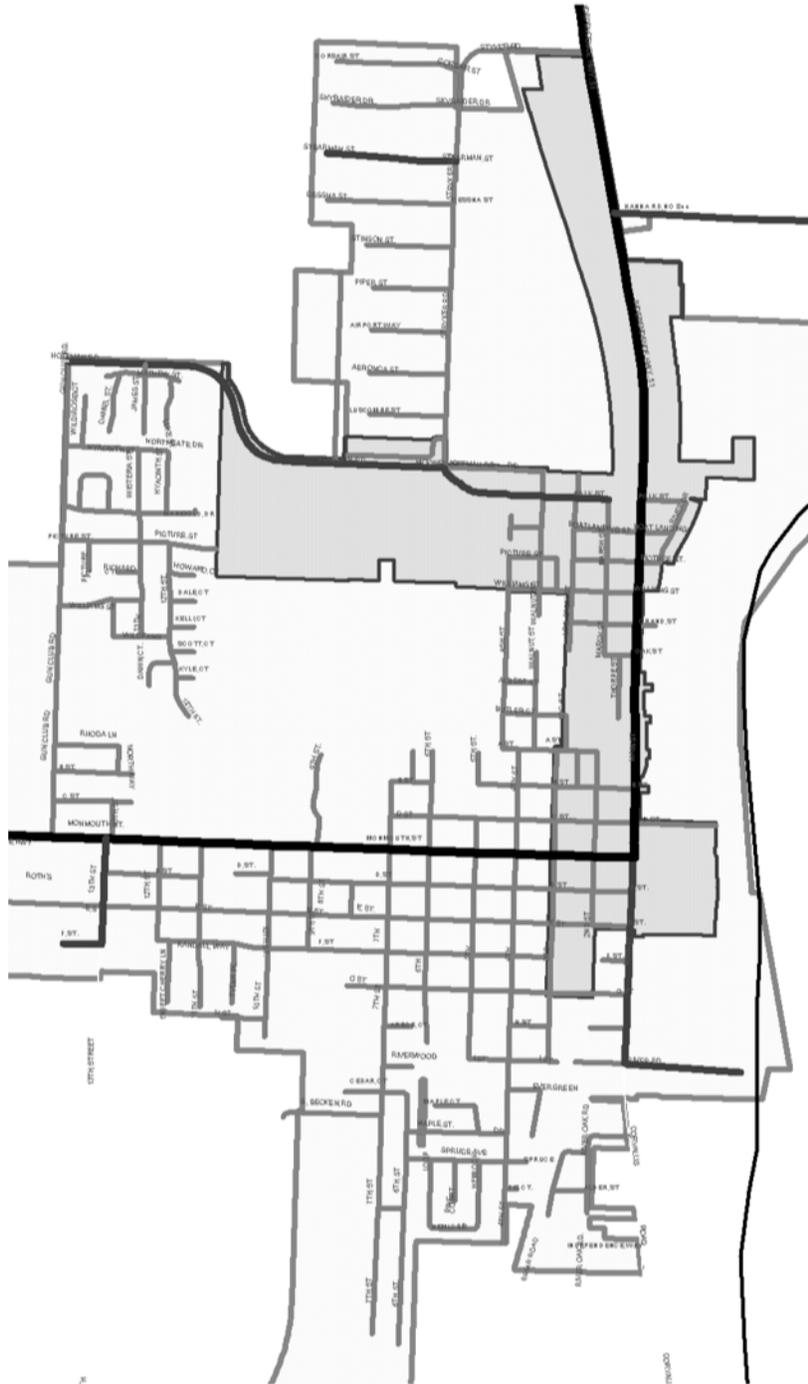
\$ _____ **Total Approved Expenses**

\$ _____ **Total Grant Award**

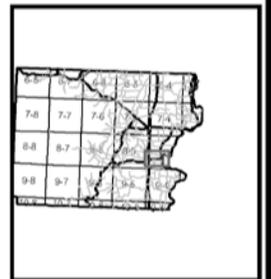
Other Comments:

City of Independence

City of Independence



■ = Independence Urban Renewal District



This map was produced using the Polk County GIS data. The GIS data is maintained by the county to support its governmental activities. The county is not responsible for map errors, omissions, misuse or misinterpretation.

1 in. = 1611 ft.



8/18/2006

